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July 17, 2020

FOIA REQUEST: EPA actions related to TNPRC Bp release

Dear FOIA Officer,

Pursuant to the federal Freedom of Information Act, I request access to and copies of the following documents related to the EPA's actions related to the release of *Burkholderia pseudomallei* at the Tulane National Primate Research Center in Covington, Louisiana, in late 2014/early 2015:

1. Copies of any remediation and/or fumigation plans and/or reports provided to Tulane or its primate research center and any related correspondence, and any long-term monitoring/surveillance plans and/or reports related to the Tulane release of *Burkholderia pseudomallei*. These plans and/or correspondence may have been in February 2015, and perhaps in other months.
2. Copies of correspondence – and any related attachments between EPA and the Senate Homeland Security Committee, relating to a March 25, 2015 letter to EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy from Committee Chairman Ron Johnson and Ranking Member Thomas R. Carper. The letter sought answers to four questions relating to EPA's actions/involvement at the Tulane National Primate Research Center. The senators set a response deadline of April 8, 2015. I'm seeking all correspondence between EPA and the committee, including the initial reply (and any attachments) to their March 25, 2015 letter, and any follow-up correspondence.
3. Copies of correspondence, and any attachments, between EPA and the Louisiana Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP) relating to the Tulane incident with *Burkholderia pseudomallei*. This state agency sent a letter dated February 20, 2015 to Ron Curry, EPA Region VI regional administrator, requesting EPA's active participation in the investigation of the release, including active engagement on strategic direction and technical guidance as well as assistance with mitigation and remediation plans, including for long-term monitoring and surveillance.
4. Copies of correspondence relating to soil testing and/or soil remediation at the Tulane National Primate Research Center or in the surrounding area during the period January 1, 2015 through July 17, 2020. Keywords used in this correspondence may include but are not limited to including: Tulane National Primate Research Center, TNPRC, *Burkholderia pseudomallei*, *B. pseudomallei*, Bp, and melioidosis. And the correspondence may include, but not be limited to EPA and Tulane, the CDC, USDA, the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry and/or the Louisiana Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness.

The records I seek are likely known to the EPA Region VI office that serves Louisiana, as well as the EPA CBRN CMAT Consequence Management Advisory Team, among others.

I would welcome a conversation with FOIA staff about this request to discuss finding the easiest and most efficient way to collect and release responsive records.

These records are being requested in my capacity as a journalist who has written extensively about the laboratory safety issues. I plan to use my editorial skills to analyze and produce original reporting works that will be published by a major media organization or in book form. A few examples of my reporting on laboratory safety issues can be found here:

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2015/05/28/biolabs-pathogens-location-incidents/26587505/> and here: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2016/06/23/undisclosed-cdc-lab-incidents/86305700/> Other examples of my reporting include: <https://www.usatoday.com/in-depth/news/investigations/deadly-deliveries/2019/03/07/maternal-death-rates-secret-hospital-safety-records-childbirth-deaths/2953224002/> and <https://www.usatoday.com/in-depth/news/investigations/deadly-deliveries/2019/05/21/episiotomy-vs-tearing-moms-cut-in-childbirth-despite-guidelines/3668035002/>

If you have any questions about my media status, please contact me. You can also review my LinkedIn profile at: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/alisonannyoung/> My reporting has been published by major news organizations including USA TODAY, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution and the Detroit Free Press, and it has been featured on CBS This Morning.

The records I am seeking with this FOIA request will shed important light on the operations of government, specifically laboratory safety issues in high-containment facilities. Issues with safety in biological labs has been an issue of significant concern among the public and within Congress, including among members of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce. An example of these concerns: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2017/01/17/congress-wants-details-of-cdc-lab-accidents/96551636/>

FOIA, as you know, requires agencies to segregate and release information. If this request is denied, in whole or in part, I ask that you give specific legal justifications for the denial or redactions. I am seeking explanations beyond an exemption citation, to allow me to craft an adequate appeal, if necessary.

Fees: I am seeking these records in electronic format if possible. I agree to pay reasonable duplication charges. However please notify me in advance if they will exceed \$25. However please be aware that when federal agencies fail to release requested documents within statutory deadlines, the agency is no longer eligible to collect any fees.

Estimated date of completion requested: The 2007 FOIA amendments require agencies to establish a way of providing requesters with an estimated completion date for their FOIA requests: <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/5/552>

(7) Each agency shall—

(A) establish a system to assign an individualized tracking number for each request received that will take longer than ten days to process and provide to each person making a request the tracking number assigned to the request; and

(B) establish a telephone line or Internet service that provides information about the status of a request to the person making the request using the assigned tracking number, including—

(i) the date on which the agency originally received the request; and

(ii) **an estimated date on which the agency will complete action on the request.**

Please send any correspondence to me by email: alisonyoungreports@gmail.com. The

documents/data requested can also be emailed to me at this address. If for some reason the information cannot be sent by email, please let me know.

If you have any questions about my request or if there are ways I can make it easier for your office to gather and release the requested information, please just let me know.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Alison Young
Reporter
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404-803-7465